Reviewer's report

Title: The time course of subsequent hospitalizations and associated costs in survivors of an ischemic stroke in Canada

Version: 2 Date: 31 March 2006

Reviewer: Peter U Heuschmann

Reviewer's report:

General
The authors investigated rates and causes of hospitalization following ischemic stroke using data from a administrative database in Canada. One of the most important findings was that most hospitalizations after the index event occurred during the first year and that hospitalizations during first months were related to a great extent to cardiovascular diseases.

Major Compulsory Revisions (that the author must respond to before a decision on publication can be reached)
1. Why did the authors used 65y of age as cutoff-point for analysing the effect of age as predictor on hospitalizations in the COX model?
2. A substantial proportion of patients (24%) already suffered from previous stroke prior to the index event for which they were included in the analyses. As the natural course of stroke (e.g. recurrence and survival rates) differs between first and recurrent strokes it might be worth to run analyses also separately for patients without prior history of stroke.

Minor Essential Revisions (such as missing labels on figures, or the wrong use of a term, which the author can be trusted to correct)

Discretionary Revisions (which the author can choose to ignore)

What next?: Unable to decide on acceptance or rejection until the authors have responded to the major compulsory revisions

Level of interest: An article of importance in its field

Quality of written English: Acceptable

Statistical review: Yes